



May — June 2005

## State wildfire season begins

Washington recorded its first fire mobilization of 2005 when State Patrol Chief John Batiste approved state support June 26 for the Walker Canyon Fire in northern Walla Walla County.

The fire, which began about 3 p.m. June 25 from a lightning strike earlier in the week, spread quickly through brush, grass and wheat lands and threatened 12 ranches. Pushed by steady winds, fire had covered 12,000 acres by the morning of June 26.

The Fire Resources Mobilization Plan authorization at 9:30 a.m. June 26 sent to the fire an additional 35 firefighters and 15 engines from Benton and Franklin counties. A state Department of Natural Resources helicopter also supported the fire-fighting operations.

Fire managers declared the Walker Canyon Fire contained at 11 a.m. June 27 after it had blackened 25,000 acres. No homes were lost, but a wooden bridge on a country road was partially burned.

Department of Natural Resources fire officials said the state's wildfire danger was near seasonal levels following above normal spring rainfall. Forest moisture conditions were running slightly above normal in western Washington and slightly below in eastern Washington.

### South Naches Command Fire:

State fire mobilization support



Teresa Lewis, left front, and Lorri Gifford, right front, both of the Emergency Management Division's (EMD) E911 Unit, post press releases to an internet website during the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) exercise May 10. Other members the exercise's virtual joint information center team were (l-r) were Jacquie Wyatt, of the Department of Information Services; Mark Clemens, EMD's CSEPP public information officer, and Janice Saari, of the Department of Employment Security. (EMD Photo)

## EMD reorganizes program units

Washington Emergency Management has a new shape and structure starting July 1 under the reorganization approved by Director Jim Mullen.

The new organization "will provide more efficient service to our customers and better highlight some of the activities we perform in the completion of our mission," said Mullen.

EMD's changes are as follows:

- Reorganize the Response and Recovery Unit into the Mitigation, Response & Recovery Unit by renaming the Operations Section to Response Section and consolidating the Mitigation, Human Services, and Public Assistance Sections into a new Mitigation and Recovery Section to better highlight the Recovery mission.
- Move the Earthquake/Tsunami/Volcano Program staff into the Programs Section of the Programs Unit (formerly the

## EMD reorganizes program units to improve service

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Preparedness Unit) to enhance their ability to complete assigned tasks and the allow them to work more closely with the Public Education Program.

- Establish an Exercise and Training Section and merge it into the Planning, Exercise and Training Unit (formerly Mitigation Analysis and Plans Unit). This section along with the current Planning, Analysis & Logistics Section (formerly Analysis & Plans Section) will facilitate planning and execution of exercises and training in Washington State.
- Consolidate Division personnel performing Homeland Security tasks into the Homeland Security Section to better acknowledge Homeland Security as an essential EMD mission and facilitate their activities.
- Move the Telecommunications Section into the Director's Office to more effectively assert the Director's role in support of division-wide programs.
- Rename the Chief of Staff to Assistant Director to better reflect the position's role and responsibilities within the organization, and to provide a clear chain of command within the Division during the absences of the Director.

"This reorganization, while not a major overhaul, represents a significant acknowledgment of the additional challenges that have accrued to the Emergency Management Division since 2001," added Mullen.

He said that EMD must position itself to continually reassess its capability to manage an increasingly complex set of programs, funding opportunities and interrelationships.

"Far from being the final word in terms of the Division's direction, this reflects our commitment to assuring a dynamic structure that will enable us to manage the multiple natural and human caused hazards confronting the State," Mullen said.

## EMD tsunami materials receive international attention

Tsunami education materials from the Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) are now in wide circulation throughout the nations bordering the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Following last December's devastating earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean region, George Crawford, EMD's earthquake program manager, authorized the United Nations' International Oceanic Commission and the International Tsunami Center in Hawaii to use EMD tsunami materials for international public education programs.

The materials included brochures and the popular "Run to High Ground" video that uses Hoh Tribal Nation storyteller Viola Riebe to educate children and adults on the earthquake and tsunami hazard along the Northwest coast.

Crawford said the video's story about how an Indian boy sees warnings signs in nature and warns his village of impending earthquake and tsunami is very compelling in village cultures of the Indian and Pacific ocean areas.

"The video's preparedness message is very powerful and easily translates across different cultures and languages," said Crawford.

The international tsunami center program plans to take the video and other EMD educational materials this summer to 23 counties in the Indian and Pacific ocean areas and the Caribbean Sea region.

## Tsunami video earns 2005 WSSPC excellence award

Washington Emergency Management Division's "Run to High Ground" video will receive the 2005 Award in Excellence in Mitigation and Outreach to Schools at the Western States Seismic Policy Council (WSSPC) annual conference next September.

The video, which was produced in 2004, uses Hoh Tribal Nation storyteller Viola Reibe to educate both children and adults about coastal earthquake and tsunami hazards and is now being used internationally for educational purposes.

## OSCAR plan set for comments

Local emergency management comments are being sought through July 15 on a revised state plan for On-Scene Command and Control Radios (OSCCAR).

The plan establishes a common radio frequency, 156.135 MHz, for use throughout the state by two or more entities in emergencies and disasters. The State channel has been designated as the primary command channel during emergencies and disasters by the State Interoperability Executive Committee.

Under the state plan, local, state and federal agencies must apply to use the channel. State and federal agencies apply to the state Department of Transportation, and local agencies will submit applications to the Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD).

EMD currently holds licenses for 8,000 first responder mobile radio units. Local emergency managers are asked to submit channel license authorization requests to EMD starting July 15. The new licenses would expire in 2012.

Don Miller, supervisor of EMD's telecommunications section, said the new authorizations also will start the first database of licenses to ensure proper use of this emergency response channel.



Mario Badua of the Telecommunications Section of the Response and Recovery Unit checks the antenna of the Emergency Management Division's new satellite communications trailer that will support emergency field operations with radio, internet and microwave capabilities. (EMD Photo)

## New communications trailer ready

After years of planning and development, the Emergency Management Division will have an operational satellite trailer July 1 to support local emergency response incidents or disaster field office operations.

Don Miller, supervisor of EMD's telecommunications section, said his section had been collecting equipment and preparing plans for the trailer over the past 10 years.

"Finding funds to build the actual trailer was the key point," he said. The trailer, complete with its full complement of communications equipment, was completed this spring.

The trailer will be used this summer on wildfire operations. Miller said telecommunications section members are prepared and trained to support state Department of Natural Resources wildfire teams, and Type 3 teams.

A single telecommunications staff member can drive a Chevrolet Suburban to haul the trailer to disaster and emergency sites. "We can haul it (the trailer) up a mountain with the Suburban" to reach a base camp, Miller said.

Capabilities of the trailer include: Internet service through satellite or T-1 line connections; local area CEMNET communications for emergency managers; amateur radio packet data for transmission of video and e-mail; computer server support for disaster site staff; cross band radios for on-scene responder communications; WEBEOC services; Emergency Alert System capabilities and a 5.5 KW portable generator for field operations.

## Drought to impact river flows

Moderate-to-severe drought conditions were recorded in river flows in 16 of Washington's 39 counties by early June, according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Conditions were most severe in the Yakima River Basin area, but moderate drought conditions also had appeared in King, Snohomish and Whatcom counties.

These hydrologic drought conditions occur when a region's total water supply in streams, lakes, reservoirs, underground water and soil moisture is substantially less than average. USGS averages are figured on 75 or more years of historical stream-flow records.

"The rain has given us a temporary respite, but only for a short time," said USGS spokesperson John Clemens. "Without snow in the mountains to melt throughout the summer, it's not looking well."

Clemens said USGS figures in early June revealed that only Clark, Grays Harbor, Pacific and Wahkiakum counties in western Washington and Asotin, Garfield and Whitman counties in eastern Washington had normal hydrologic conditions.

He said hydrologic conditions are dynamic and can change day by day. "Having above-average precipitation this summer will certainly carry us further, but if nothing else changes, we can expect hydrologic conditions to get more severe as summer progresses."

The National Weather Service predicted that June-August rainfall in the region likely would be above-normal. However, NWS officials added that it is generally too late in the season to eliminate the hydrologic drought that is expected to affect region water supplies later this summer.

## State wildfire season underway

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was approved at 6:15 p.m. June 29 for the South Naches Command Fire, about eight miles west of Yakima near Naches.

The fire had burned about 400 acres of brush and trees and had threatened about a dozen homes. A total of 60 firefighters and 24 engines were sent to the fire from Douglas, Chelan, Grant, Benton and Franklin counties. The mobilization ended at 1 p.m. June 30

## Partners conference sets dates

Researchers, scholars, and practitioners in emergency management are invited to participate in the Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference to be held April 18-19, 2006.

Held each spring for the past decade, Partners in Emergency Preparedness has grown into the largest emergency management conference in Washington State and the Pacific Northwest. If you are interested in making a presentation at the 2006 conference, send an abstract or brief description of your topic no later than August 31, 2005, to John Labadie, Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference; (206) 684-8311; e-mail: [john.labadie@seattle.gov](mailto:john.labadie@seattle.gov).

## Tsunami review set for July 8

A series of discussions between local, state and federal officials followed the June 14 Pacific Coast tsunami warning from the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Alaska Tsunami Warning Center.

The Alaska center issued the warning after an earthquake with an initial magnitude of 7.4 struck about 7:50 p.m. about 90 miles southwest of the California coastal town of Crescent City.

State Emergency Operations Officers relayed the warning to affected local agencies through both the National Alert and Warning System and the law enforcement Access System. The access message was sent at 7:58 p.m. and the NAWAS warning was sent at 8:10 p.m.

The notices set off a barrage of telephone calls to local 9-1-1 centers and to the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Camp Murray. Paul McNeil, state EOC supervisor, noted that state emergency operations officers handled 152 calls in a little more than an hour while transmitting the warning message through three different systems and calling each of the eight coastal Indian nation organizations.

"We feel the overall response went well in Washington," said Maj. Gen. Timothy Lowenberg, director, Washington Military Department. "but

## EMD, FEMA to test warning system

Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) is one of two jurisdictions in the nation that will participate in a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) pilot project to improve warning capabilities.

As approved in April 2005, the integrated Alert and Warning System Pilot Project will build upon other warning systems that are supported by FEMA and the Information Analysis and Infrastructure Project Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security.

Major goals of the pilot project are to:

- Create and/or collect warnings from multiple sources and jurisdictions via a common alerting protocol.
- Distribute individual warnings to the appropriate federal, regional, state and local all-hazard alert installations.
- Disseminate and deliver individual warnings to the appropriate government officials, warning broadcasters, and federal public subscribers using modern technology that complements the existing Emergency Alert System infrastructure.
- Complement the Graphic User Interface being developed by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Hazcollect Project.

Don Miller, supervisor of EMD's telecommunications section, stated EMD's participation in this pilot project will ensure that our state will have input into the development of a national system that would include these features:

- Compatibility with our existing systems to protect existing investments.
- Input from such groups as the Washington State Emergency Communications Committee, local emergency managers, the Washington State Association of Broadcasters, the regional NOAA weather office warning systems managers, U.S. Geological Survey, the government of Canada, and EMD management.
- Compatibility with the NOAA Hazcollect project, Mystatesusa internet information system, and EMnet or other web-based emergency management information system.

Finally, Miller stated the project will enable Washington to advance to a higher level of warning capability than currently is in use.

## Rutten new UMCD commander

Lt. Col. Donna Rutten will take command of the Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD) July 14, replacing Lt. Col. David Holliday, who is being reassigned to the U.S. Forces Command headquartered in Georgia. The change is part of the Army's normal two-year rotation of commanders. Rutten, a West Point graduate, has served as commander of the Edgewood Chemical Activity at the Aberdeen, Md., Proving

## UMCD starts again after fire shutdown

The Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD) resumed June 9 the destruction of rockets carrying GB sarin agent after a three-week shutdown to investigate rockets fires in the Explosive Containment Room of the depot's incinerator.

In its first day of operation after the shutdown, the facility processed 251 rockets without incident. The depot, which began destruction of its chemical weapons last September, has destroyed more than 14,500 rockets, or about 16 per cent of the facility's stockpile.

Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) ordered the shutdown May 18 after three fires had broke out since April involving inadvertent ignition of propellant remaining in the rockets as they were being cut for incineration. All three fires occurred in the Explosive Containment Room where no workers are present, and where is no threat of chemical agent release.

DEQ determined on June 9 it would be safe to resume processing rockets without knowing the cause of the fires and with the expectation that more fires are likely.

A national task force recommended increased fire prevention measures inside the containment room. Depot workers have installed two additional water sprayers behind the blade that cuts the rockets. The water sprayers clean and cool the cutting blade.



## Quest completes 9-1-1 upgrade

The State Enhanced 911 Program reports Qwest's completion of the installation of a major enhancement to the 9-1-1 system, providing redundancy and diversity to the 9-1-1 network. The dual tandem project, a joint venture of the State E911 Program and Qwest affects every county in Washington with Qwest service (with the exception of King County which already has dual tandem ability).

Previous to the Dual Tandem implementation, only a single selective router was available to the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for receipt of a 9-1-1 call. If, for some reason, the Selective Router failed, the 9-1-1 call would not be received at the PSAP.

This project allowed for an additional Selective Router to each PSAP. This second Selective Router is positioned in a separate location at a different switching office. The probability of a 9-1-1 call not reaching the PSAP has been greatly reduced. This enhancement affects all Qwest phone subscribers.

Because of the statewide magnitude of this project, cutover to the Selective Routers was staggered over a three-month period. The Dual Tandem Project was completed at the cost of \$1.8 mil to the State E911 Program. The affected counties incurred no additional costs.

## FMAG grants can pay fire costs

The experts predict this year's fire season will range from normal to extreme. All experts agree that we won't know how bad the fire season is until it is over. We do know the drought conditions continue, although the recent rains have helped it is not enough, and that the snow pack was insufficient and is now gone.

Fighting fires is expensive. Fire departments can seek reimbursement through Fire Mobilization if declared or DNR if the fire is on state land. Law enforcement, counties, and local emergency management agencies are frequently involved with the fires but do not have these options to reimburse their costs. If Fire Mobilization is not declared and the fire occurs on lands that DNR or the federal government does not support, the fire districts may believe they have to absorb the costs.

The Fire Management Assistance Grant Program provides financial assistance to state, local, and tribal governments for the mitigation, management, and control of fires when a threat of a major disaster exists. This assistance applies to fires on publicly or privately owned forests or grasslands and may include reimbursement for a percentage of the costs for labor, equipment, supplies, mobilization, demobilization, and state costs incurred under Fire Mobilization.

Timing is critical, and the request for a federal fire declaration can only be made while the fire is **threatening** to destroy homes, communities, or public facilities. For more information on this grant program, when you should contact us, and how we can help, please contact Dianna Staley, EMD Public Assistance Program, 360-570-6315, or [d.staley@emd.wa.gov](mailto:d.staley@emd.wa.gov).

## PSRW honors EMD employees

Seventeen Washington Emergency Management division employees were honored during May's Public Service Recognition Week for outstanding performance during the past year. The employees were:

**Marty Best**, state hazard mitigation programs manager, was recognized for his development and implementation of two new statewide competitive hazard mitigation grant programs. His efforts helped Washington communities to develop applications that were successful in nationwide competition and enabled agencies and communities to hazard mitigation planning requires of the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

**Mark Stewart**, mitigation strategist, was the primary author of the state's new Hazard Mitigation Plan which enabled Washington to complete the nation's first enhanced state hazard mitigation plan. This enhanced plan will allow the state to receive for mitigation up to 20 percent of the federal aid awards in a presidentially-declared disaster, compared to 7.5 per cent with a standard state mitigation plan.

**Homeland Security Section of Dan Staber, Max Messman, Sheryl Jardine, Ute Weber, Alex Chapman, Kyle Herman and Shawn McCallister.** Over the past year, the section has managed nearly \$150 million in federal homeland security funding. It has worked closely with other state agencies, local jurisdictions, tribes and private citizens to help implement the state's homeland security goals and objectives.

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## EMD staff recognition, promotions

**Kurt Hardin** was selected June 24 as the new Mitigation, Response and Recovery Unit Manager, succeeding Diane Offord. Hardin, who joined the Emergency Management Division in 1996, has been the customer support section supervisor in the Enhanced 9-1-1 Unit since 2000. He also has worked as a hazardous materials exercise and training officer, an all-hazards planner, a hazard mitigation grants and public assistance recovery program member, public assistance program manager, and individual assistance program administrator.

**Edward Toft** joined the Emergency Management Division May 16 as Information Technology Desktop Support specialist in the Telecommunications Section of the Response and Recovery Unit. He previously worked in the Washington Military Department headquarters.

**Jocelyn Redmond** was promoted to Information Technology System Specialist 3 on June 1. Redmond started in EMD in 2002 as an ITSS 2 in training.

**Ed Quarles**, who was an all-hazard planner in EMD's Mitigation, Analysis and Plans Unit since 1999, retired June 2 from state service. A U.S. Air Force veteran, Quarles came to EMD from the Department of Natural Resources. His EMD service featured extensive development of geographic information system products and analysis.

**Bruce Baardson** accepted a position as senior program coordinator in the E911 Unit on May 16. An EMD employee since 1999, Baardson had worked as a supervisor in the Response and Recovery Unit's public assistance section.

**Robert Isaman** was appointed May 18 to the Transportation Security Manager position in the Homeland Security Section of the Preparedness Unit. Isaman, who joined EMD in July 1999, had been the section's Homeland Security Grants Coordinator.

## Enhanced 9-1-1 upgraded in state

The delivery speed of the new enhanced 9-1-1 data network upgrade can be compared to the difference between a jet and a horse, according to William Boyd, E911 Technical Manager.

The Qwest Frame Relay Upgrade Project replaced outdated equipment (1200 BAUD or BPS, bits per second) with state-of-the-art technology allowing for faster delivery of automatic location identification of a 9-1-1 caller. The antiquated equipment was replaced with a T1 (1.544 megabits per second) with two PVCs (permanent virtual circuits) providing a committed information rate (**CIR**) of 16 kilobits per second. The upgrade also transmits longitude and latitude information for cell phone calls.

The upgrade, completed June 30, cost the State E911 Program \$1.6 mil. It affects all Washington counties with Qwest services with the exclusion of King County and those counties served by Verizon.

## Tsunami review set for July 8

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we also see places where we can improve the system." At Lowenberg's direction, EMD scheduled a July 8 meeting of the State and Local Workgroup at Camp Murray.

## PSRW honors EMD employees

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**State Emergency Operations Officers Colleen Baardson, Dan Fox, Ken Lehman, Richard Searles, Teresa Williams, Edward Lamar, Toney Raines and Alan Steele.** These employees staff the Emergency Management Division's Alert and Warning Center which provides 24-hour coverage for alert, warning, resource coordination and notification of emergency events affecting the entire state. In 2004, they managed 3,352 incidents. They coordinated hundreds of resource requests, issued nearly 600 warnings to local emergency 9-1-1 centers and issued 7,300 notifications to state agencies.



### Emergency Responder

May—June 2005

Published by the Emergency Management Division of the Washington Military Department

#### Major General

**Timothy J. Lowenberg**

**The Adjutant General**

**Jim Mullen, Director**

**Rob Harper, Mark Clemens, Penelope Cassidy, Editors**

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The Washington Emergency Management division, including the State Emergency Operations Center, is located in Building 20 on Camp Murray, located at exit 122 on Interstate 5 south of Tacoma, Washington.